



# THE VOICE OF THE VALLEY

The Newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Gay and Lesbian Task Force / Vol.2, Issue 3

## THE COMMUNITY ANSWERS THE CALL AT PRIDEFEST

By **Renaë Bennett**

I can't say that I was thrilled that the temperatures reached the 90s, or that the humidity promised to make it feel like it was in the triple digits, but I can honestly say that the sense of accomplishment I felt as I carried the 780 completed Discrimination Surveys to the car at the end of the day outweighed any discomfort I might have been feeling otherwise.

What a tremendous success you all made of our first major distribution of the survey. And how grateful I am to the many individuals who "came through" for me that day. We have few enough opportunities to celebrate who we are, and thanks to the hard work of all those who put this year's festival together, we had that chance. But despite the levity of the day, each of nearly 800 of our community took the time to fill out the survey.

It is unfortunate that we must continue to be vigilant in securing our rights as citizens entitled to equal protection under the law. How nice it would be if there were no incidents of discrimination that would not elicit an immediate response from the authorities as being clearly against the law. But that is still not the case in many communities in this country; and it is certainly not the case in the Lehigh Valley. So, like the Jew who breaks the glass at his/her wedding to remind us of the sadness of the destruction of the temple in the midst of our joy, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders must be reminded of the tenuousness of our "citizenship" in the midst of our celebration.

The woman of color who returns from a day's outing to find "Die nigger" sprawled on her driveway, frightened as she may be, is comforted by the knowledge that the state does not endorse that behavior. The Latino man subject-

ed to racial epithets hurled at him as he closes his store, may be disheartened. But in many communities throughout the United States (including the Lehigh Valley) he can expect the authorities to validate his oppression at the very least, and perhaps even protection from further harassment.

But the gay man who is beaten, the lesbian who is raped, the bisexual who is fired or the transgendered individual who is turned away from an establishment can expect, at best, to have his incident report filed (notably not under the heading "bias" which carries a heavier penalty), and at worst, ignored.

The facts are not always what we want to hear. But we cannot ignore the reality that we are not "entitled" to equal protection. And that remains the case often because both gays and straights don't know it. Conversely, it remains a fact, at least in part, because so many of us think it will never change. Well, the survey is testament to the fact that incidents of hate occur in our community. And the attention so many of you have given it is testament to the growing perception that we can do something about it.

Thanks again to all the Task Force volunteers who worked so hard to distribute and collect the surveys, and once again to all of you who participated. ▲

**Have you responded to the discrimination survey that you received in the mail? Please complete and return the survey as soon as possible. We're hoping to compile the results by October 1, 1995**

**AUGUST 1995**

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### **The Voice of Valley**

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the Lehigh Valley Gay  
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### **Communications Committee**

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Kim Snyder, member

Frank Baran, editor  
Chris Gaugler, design

Your Task Force Board is working hard to unite the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender community behind issues and activities. We are committed to reaching out to the whole community, and working to make the Lehigh Valley a safe and interesting place to be.

Please note - Task Force Board Meetings will be

held on the SECOND WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH. This is a change from the third Wednesday of the past year.

As always we welcome visitors, and would love to see new faces. Meetings continue to be held at 7:30 p.m. in College Center Room 115 (the Trustees' Board Room) at Northampton Community College.

**ON THE MOVE**



# BEYOND THE BELTWAY: State of the States 1995

## A Look At Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Issues At The State and Local Levels

Anti-gay attacks through state legislation were pervasive during the 1995 state legislative sessions, and seem to be on the increase according to state organizers. Meanwhile, gay, lesbian and bisexual advocacy organizations were adapting to the changing political climate and successfully defeated many anti-gay measures while pursuing limited advances toward non-discrimination.

These are the summary findings of "Beyond the Beltway: State of the States 1995," the first survey on the issue conducted by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. NGLTF is a leading national civil rights organization that has supported grassroots organizing since 1973.

Most state legislative sessions have ended for this year: 43 states will have completed the 1995 session by the end of July, with seven other states holding full-year sessions ending later this year. "Beyond the Beltway" is a state-by-state survey of gay-related legislation that moved forward during the 1995 sessions, with details of other non-legislative activities that offer a fuller picture of the political landscape facing gay/lesbian/bisexual people at the state level in 1995.

Gay-related legislation moved forward in 33 states, with 30 states being the sites of anti-gay measures or significant anti-gay attacks on related measures, while 18 states advanced non-discrimination measures that include sexual orientation in some way. This document tracks 97 gay-related measures that experienced legislative movement this year, with 39 anti-gay measures; 12 non-discrimination measures that were vetoed, killed or indefinitely stalled due to anti-gay advocacy; 10 non-discrimination measures that were specific to sexual orientation not killed due to anti-gay attacks; 35 non-discrimination measures that were not specific to sexual orientation, but included it in a broader list of categories; and one non-classified measure (a measure in Hawaii calls for investigating ways to offer more equal benefits to gay/lesbian employees, but the intent of the legislation is to undermine court

(See **STATES** on page 5)

# A "PRIDEFUL" FIRST FOR THE VALLEY

By **Chris Ackner-Boes**

There's something about "firsts" that captures the imagination. Firstborns, first dates, first Christmases. Ethnic groups take special pride when one of their own succeeds in an area hitherto closed to the likes of them. Women share a sense of accomplishment with the first of their gender to achieve something noteworthy.

So it is with Gays and Lesbians on those all too rare occasions when one of us is brave enough to admit that she is one of us as she stands in the spotlight. And the spotlight shone on one of our own at the Commencement Ceremony at Northampton Community College on May 24, when the NCC Trustee Award was presented to Julia Renae Bennett, who accepted the award as the first openly lesbian student ever to be so honored.

The Trustee Award is presented annually to a graduating senior who excels in scholarship, shows exemplary leadership qualities, and displays the character and conviction of an outstanding citizen. S/he is chosen from among all graduating students, and merely being honored by nomination is noteworthy. This year's graduating class of more than four hundred degree recipients boasted five nominees. From among these outstanding nominees the Selection Committee chose Renae as this year's recipient after considering her record of accomplishments, and the strength of her interview, recommendations and both written and oral presentations to the committee.

At the Awards Convocation, held at the college in April of this year, Renae was called upon to deliver the student address. In it she described the journey she has taken from her untimely dismissal from the military to graduation from the college. Many in our community shared some of her story at Colonel Margarethe Cammermeyer's Lecture on Discrimination in the United States Military in March of this year. To an audience of faculty, administrators, parents, and students Renae explained that her sexual orientation was not the reason she was chosen to receive the award. "I do not believe that I received the Trustee Award because I am a lesbian, anymore than I believe I received it because I am from Kentucky. I believe I am being honored for the hard work it takes to succeed."

And there has been much hard work over the three years that Renae has been in the valley. From an appearance on the Joe Dadona show in 1993, where she dis-

cussed her dismissal from the U.S. Air Force under an assumed name, through the Gay and Lesbian Rally in Allentown later that year at which she, as the featured speaker, admitted only that she was suspected by the military of being a lesbian, through her election to the board of the newly formed Gay and Lesbian Task Force in 1994, her election to the position of president of the NCC Gay, Lesbian, Bi Student Union that same year, through a two-year term as president, speaking engagements at Rutgers University and LCCC, to being honored as the most accomplished member of her graduating class, Renae has gained the admiration of many, and has become a worthy role model for gays and lesbians across the valley.

All too often those of us who are gays and lesbians are asked to justify the behavior of one of our own - to explain inappropriate behavior, to distance ourselves from reports of activities made all the more "notorious" by the sexual orientation of the participants. Seldom do we swell with pride when we read of something done or said by a fellow gay person, because all too often we are only reading about it because it is bad.

We should take great pride in one of our own who, through hard work, determination, talent and courage has risen to meet the challenges she faced as a lesbian in this society, and who has taught us all a lesson in the process. ▲

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# STONEWALL AND DIAMONZ VOLLEY FOR A GOOD CAUSE

By **Chris Ackner-Boes**

Cries of "Let's go, Diamonz. Let's go, Stonewall" could be heard far and wide on Sunday afternoon, July 9, on the newly constructed volleyball court behind Diamonz. The tension mounted early in the first game until everyone settled into his/her position. Stonewall players bedecked in white shirts bearing the Stonewall logo returned serves wielded by triangle-shirted Diamonz players.

Fun and sportspersonship were clearly the order of the day, as belly flops in the sand brought cheers as loud as aces. Seriousness seldom won out over the lyrics of cheers created especially for the occasion and delivered flawlessly by "girls" from the Stonewall sporting color-coordinated outfits.

The fund-raising volleyball game was the brainchild of the owner and manager of Diamonz and Stonewall as a great way to raise funds in support of the Task

Force. Staff members from each of the bars willingly gave their time and talent, and supportive community members put up the bucks by sponsoring them.

Teams played a total of three brilliantly executed games, with the first won by Diamonz and the remaining two won by the Stonewall. But it didn't seem to matter who won. Win or lose, players did more laughing than slamming; and the crowd thoroughly enjoyed the day.

The Task Force would like to thank the organizers and players alike. Playing for the Stonewall: Roger Frankenfield, Mitch Hemphill, Tim Galcoci, Bob Sweeney, Tom Mulcahy, Matthew Stitzer and Dean Walbridge. Playing for Diamonz: Rick Cabuski, Tony Balzano, Denny Carrigan, Mary Rogers, Bonnie Rice, Jocelyn Wurster, Joanie Lewis, Nancy Steinmetz and Candy Shock. Special thanks to Lenora and Bobby.

At this printing the tally is in and we



are thrilled to announce that the proceeds from the afternoon totaled \$761 raised by Diamonz and more than \$600 raised by Stonewall — indeed a very successful fund-raiser. The only disappointing aspect of the day was the community response. In this writer's opinion, there should have been many more of us out there cheering these good people on. Come on, folks. Shouldn't we support the people who do what they can to contribute to the community? So when you see fliers advertising the next volleyball game, make a note to COME OUT and cheer. ▲

## PA SENATORS DIVIDED ON ANTI-GAY AMENDMENT

By **Frank Baran**

An attempt by Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., to deny gay men and lesbians access to AIDS services was thwarted July 27 in a vote that crossed party lines.

Helms was able to get a majority of the Senate to forbid the federal government from targeting AIDS prevention, counseling and education services to the gay community, but a clever move by Sen. Nancy Landon Kassebaum, R-Kans., defused the anti-gay amendment.

The Senate went on to vote 96-3, with Helms and two other conservative Republicans dissenting, to reauthorize the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act for another five years.

Lawmakers are working toward a Sept. 30 deadline to reauthorize the program for another five years. Now that the Senate

has passed its bill, action shifts to the House of Representatives, where a similar measure is ready for a vote after Labor Day.

The Ryan White CARE Act, passed in 1990, serves as a lifeline for people with AIDS who would otherwise be ineligible or unable to afford medical care, prescription drugs, home health care, transportation assistance to medical appointments and other services. Funds are allocated to each state, for distribution to local AIDS service providers, and to cities hardest hit by the epidemic.

A bill extending the life of the program for five years had bipartisan support, with 63 senators, including Pennsylvania's Arlen Specter, listing themselves as co-sponsors. After delaying action on the bill for more than a month, Helms mounted an attack on the program, using characteristically hateful language.

Helms attacked gay men in general and specific AIDS organizations. He accused gay men of killing Ryan White, the Indiana hemophiliac for whom the legislation is named, with "their" contaminated blood. He called AIDS prevention programs "thinly veiled attempts to restructure values of American families in

(See **SENATE** on page 4)

**Steve Black**

A t t o r n e y

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As the sun set over the misty streets of Bethlehem, neighbors on Edgewood Avenue could hear the rustling sounds of flier-folding, label-writing and envelope stuffing. The new board of the Task Force gathered with volunteers at Dave and Frank's for their first "mailing party" of the new year. Energy ran high, as members coordinated efforts to make sure that information reached membership about upcoming events.

The new board has quickly moved into high gear, having raised over \$450 at

a benefit drag show at Diamonz on Thursday, June 22. The Task Force was not the only one who made money — Mike the D.J. was the happy winner of the 50/50 raffle. Mike spun home \$80 richer. The talent was abundant, and a good time was had by all. Hats off to Al and all the Girls, and a special thanks to Lenora.



The gay and lesbian community enjoyed a fun-filled summer Saturday at the first Gay and Lesbian Family and Friends Day at Dorney Park on July 22. The Task Force, along with Grassroots Queers from Philadelphia, organized the day-long event. For the unbelievably low price of \$16, gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, transgenders and their family and non-gay friends got a chance to frolic at Dorney and Wildwater Kingdom.

## SENATE *Continued from p.3*

favor of the homosexual lifestyle." And he described "the homosexual lobby" as "one of the most potent lobbying efforts in the country."

Helms said he had "a deep sympathy" for gay men who died of AIDS-related complications. "I have a deep sympathy for anybody who sticks a loaded pistol in his mouth and pulls the trigger," he said. "You are playing Russian roulette either way."

Helms' major amendment would prohibit any public or private agency that receives Ryan White funds from being used to promote, "directly or indirectly," homosexuality as "natural, normal or healthy." Moreover, programs aimed at people at risk for HIV transmission could not affirm "in any way that engaging in a homosexual act is desirable, acceptable, or permissible." No funding could be used to describe techniques of homosexual sex.

Specter voted against the anti-gay amendment, but freshman Republican Rick Santorum voted for it.

Kassebaum attempted to blunt the effect of Helms' amendment by securing passage of a measure that prohibited the use of any Ryan White funds to promote sexual activity, "whether homosexual or heterosexual," or intravenous drug use; agencies would still be allowed to deliver essential medical and support services. The vote was 76-23. Specter and Santorum both voted for Kassebaum's proposal.

When two amendments conflict, the one adopted with the larger vote — in this case Kassebaum's — is given greater weight when the Senate and House prepare the final version of the legislation.

In another amendment, Helms proposed to cap Ryan White funding for the next five years at the current level — \$633 mil-

lion — despite a projected increase in caseload. The Senate rejected the amendment, 32 to 67. Santorum voted to cap funding; Specter voted against.

Yet another amendment would have limited all federal spending on AIDS to no more than the amount Congress appropriates for cancer. Helms argued that cancer kills 18 times more people than AIDS, yet the federal government spends \$91,000 per AIDS death compared to \$5,000 per cancer death.

Kassebaum said Helms' figures were off the mark because he failed to take into account other federal outlays, such as those for Medicare and Medicaid. "When you do that," she said, "HIV/AIDS receives \$5.4 billion, cancer receives \$15 billion and heart disease receives \$34 billion."

In his remarks on the floor, Helms did not mention that he is the chief advocate in the Senate for government subsidies to tobacco companies. Lung cancer causes more deaths each year than AIDS.

Helms' attempt to link AIDS and cancer funding lost, 15 to 84. Both Santorum and Specter voted with the majority.

AIDS activist groups said they were relieved the Senate finally acted on the reauthorization legislation — which Helms had delayed for more than a month. At the same time, they expressed anger over Helms' stridency.

"Jesse Helms' amendments were extreme and born of supreme ignorance," said Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign. "They were based on faulty and nonsensical information. The programs Helms was attacking are not in the business of promoting sexuality — they are in the business of saving lives."

William Freeman, executive director of the National Association of People with AIDS, said Helms demonstrated "blatant hate, lies and intolerance." ▲

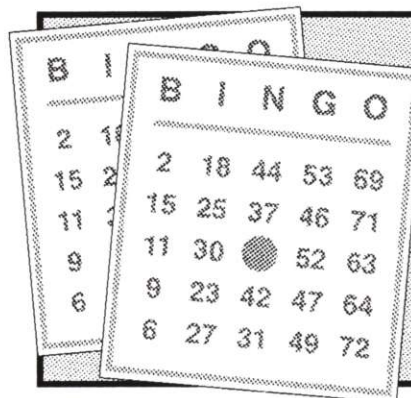


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The Task Force's  
monthly BINGO  
games will return  
in the fall.

New dates will be  
announced soon.



arguments for same-gender couples seeking the freedom to marry in that state).

Many of the anti-gay measures advanced this year focused on the areas of family and education — curtailing rights to adoption and foster care and mandating only negative references to gay-related issues and individuals through the educational system.

"The Radical Right is successfully exploiting emotional flashpoints around children in the context of family and education," said Robert Bray, NGLTF Field Organizer. "These are areas where myths and misinformation about child abuse, parenting abilities and the existence of diverse family structures ignite fears and inspire extremist legislation. In the name of 'family values,' the Radical Right frequently attacks the ability of gay people to care for our own families and children."

This year also saw a number of measures advanced to permit statewide ballot referenda in those states which do not currently have a mechanism for voter initiatives. These measures are frequently supported by anti-gay Radical Right activists, who have initiated a national campaign of state and local anti-gay ballot measures.

Most of the non-discrimination measures that moved forward were not targeted only at anti-gay discrimination, but included sexual orientation in a broader list of other characteristics. Even so, NGLTF views the inclusion of sexual orientation in any non-discrimination policies on the state level as an important step toward fairness. Many of these non-discrimination clauses were included in hate crimes and health-related legislation. Due to the nation's health-care crisis and lack of a federal solution, dozens of health-related measures were advanced on the state level.

"Years and years of organizing and education on the issues of AIDS and anti-gay violence has clearly paid off," Bray said. "Gay advocates and our allies are vigilant in addressing anti-gay violence through a variety of hate crimes provisions on the state level. Meanwhile, we also recognize the history and continued existence of anti-gay discrimination in insurance and health-care practices. Our work has succeeded in some states where non-discrimination clauses in health care policies are routinely advanced."

One measure that directly tackled

the issue of anti-gay discrimination needs to be highlighted. Rhode Island this year became the ninth state in the nation to implement a statewide non-discrimination measure when it passed a law banning discrimination based on sexual orientation in public and private employment, credit, housing and public accommodations.

"Rhode Island served as inspiration to the rest of the country, where activists were frequently under assault by the Radical Right," Bray said. "It was encouraging to see a state take an important step toward valuing all citizens equally, even in the face of vicious anti-gay maneuvers to kill the bill."

Of the 97 measures, 15 have been signed by governors so far (seven states continue sessions until the end of the year). Of those measures, six were anti-gay (although one of Montana's measures was stripped of anti-gay language prior to passage); one was a non-discrimination measure specifically targeting sexual orientation (Rhode Island's measure); and eight were non-discrimination measures that included sexual orientation in a broad list of categories (these were predominantly related to hate crimes and health care).

"This survey documents what activists have been telling us all year — the national climate of divisiveness and intolerance is playing itself out at the state and local level," Bray said. "Invigorated by mainstream electoral success, Radical Right politicians this year attempted to turn campaign rhetoric into state policies. On the local level, there was no 'Contract with America' to deter legislators from delving immediately into explicit, anti-gay measures. Thankfully, gay activists have risen to the occasion, frequently responding successfully to increased attacks even in states that have a limited history of gay political organizing."

Some hot spots from 1995 legislative sessions:

Alaska, South Dakota and Utah: All advanced measures that would bar the legal recognition of marriages performed between individuals of the same gender. These measures were introduced as pre-emptive strikes against a pending court case in Hawaii that is challenging that state's prohibition against same-gender marriages. Alaska's measure has not moved from the committee to which it was assigned, although it has an opportunity to move during the second year of the state's two-year session. Utah's measure

passed and was signed by the governor. Meanwhile, South Dakota's measure was narrowly defeated after it inspired the organization of the state's first gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender political group and was the cause for the first openly gay person in the state to offer testimony on gay-related legislation.

Iowa: Following Radical Right pressure, the Des Moines School Board last January dropped a proposal for the "infusion of sexual orientation issues" in public school curriculum materials. The board action followed anti-gay protests from Radical Right leaders, including Bill Horn of The Report (producer of the virulently anti-gay video, "The Gay Agenda") and right-wing radio talk show host Jan Mickelson. School board member Jonathan Wilson made national headlines when he came out as gay during local hearings on the measure. Since then, right-wing state legislators attempted to pass an amendment to the state's appropriations bill that would have banned state funds from being used to "promote or encourage homosexuality" in state colleges and universities. The "no promo homo" measure is similar to those offered by U.S. Senator Jesse Helms.

Montana: A national uproar was sparked by a bill that would have required individuals convicted under the state's "deviate sexual conduct" law (which prohibits consensual homosexual acts) to register for life with local law enforcement agencies. The bill's sponsor, Rep. Sen. Al Bishop, said gay sex was "even worse than a violent sexual act," such as rape and child abuse. The "deviate sexual conduct" provision of the registration bill was subsequently deleted under national scrutiny.

(See **STATES** on page 6)

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discriminated  
against?**



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### Contributor

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## STATES *Continued from p.5*

The bill's sponsors are quoted as saying a local Christian Coalition chapter worked with them on the measure.

**Nebraska:** The State Department of Social Services instituted a ban on gay and lesbian adoption. The sponsor of the measure, Mary Dean Harvey, director of the Department of Social Services, denies any link to the Radical Right. However, the similarity between her ban and a bill before the state assembly (No. 255) — sponsored by state Sen. Kate Witek — is acute. Witek is described by local activists as "far right." In fact, the state legislation was withdrawn following the announcement of Harvey's measure.

**Texas:** The state currently has a hate crime law that has been deemed unenforceable because of the measure's vague language. In attempting to specifically identify hate crimes, a measure was introduced this year that enhances penalties for hate crimes and

strengthens the definition of a hate crime. The measure included sexual orientation in the list of characteristics for which victim selection is prohibited. The measure was attacked by the Radical Right due to the inclusion of sexual orientation. State Rep. Warren Chisum, the leader of the influential 75-member Conservative Caucus, fought against the measure because, he said, homosexuals "put themselves in harm's way." When asked whether he believed the victims were bringing the violence upon themselves, he said "Absolutely. The criminal element has found out that this is an easy group to prey upon." In the past two years, eight Texan men have been slain in apparent anti-gay or gay-related incidents. ▲

*[The 24-page "Beyond the Beltway" survey is available from Beth Barrett, (202) 332-6483, ext. 3311. For more information, write the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force at 2320 17th St. N.W., Washington, DC 20009-2702.]*

## MEETINGS

### P-FLAG to meet

Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG) meets on the second Sunday of each month from 3:30 to 5 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 701 Lechaweki Ave., Fountain Hill. Everyone is welcome, regardless of your sexual orientation. For more information, call (215) 368-2473 or (215) 234-4049.

### Gay Men return

Gay Men of the Lehigh Valley will resume their meetings in the fall. The group has been meeting on the second and fourth Saturdays of the month at 7 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 701 Lechaweki Ave., Fountain Hill.

### Support group for youth

Your Turf, a support group for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth ages 16 to 22 meets on Friday evenings at 7 p.m. at 1345 Linden St., Apt. 3, Allentown. The group is sponsored by the Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley.

## Get the Word Out!

Do you want to reach the Lehigh Valley gay community with your product or service? An advertisement in *The Voice of the Valley* is the way to go.

The Task Force newsletter is distributed to members and patrons of gay-friendly establishments in Lehigh and Northampton counties. Total circulation is 1,000.

### ADVERTISING RATES

Full page	\$150
Half page	\$75
Quarter page	\$50
Business card	\$25

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### ADVERTISING DEADLINE

October issue	September 15
December issue	November 15